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## Westville oil refinery will be cleaned

(<http://www.post-trib.com/news/2993478,new-camor1230.article>)

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**BY GITTE LAASBY**

WESTVILLE -- After more than two decades, one of the nation's most polluted sites -- the former Cam-Or waste oil refinery in Westville -- will finally be completely cleaned up around 2013.

It will also mean fewer public health risks from exposure to lead and other dangerous pollutants, and improve the environment, officials said.

The announcement came Wednesday after government officials and 13 companies reached a \$14.4 million agreement last week.

The companies were Cam-Or customers and helped generate the waste oil at the now-vacant 15-acre site north of Indiana 2 near U.S. 421.

The site is bordered by private homes to the east and located within the West-Tech Redevelopment Area.

Originally owned by Westville Oil, the facility operated as a refinery for reprocessing waste oil starting in 1934.

From the 1950s to 1978, waste oil discarded at the facility was stored in 11 unlined lagoons, which allowed contaminants to leach into soil, groundwater and Crumpacker Ditch.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency conducted a cleanup in 1987, treating 9.5 million gallons of contaminated water and removing about 112 drums. The agency later determined more remediation was necessary.

"The pollution at this industrial site occurred over several decades and the clean-up of contaminated soil and groundwater is expected to take years, so it was a complicated process to hammer out a legal agreement to fully fund the remediation of the site," said Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller in a statement.

"This agreement helps resolve a lingering environmental impediment to future economic development and hopefully jobs for the LaPorte and Porter county areas."

Groundwater along a one-mile plume extending from the site is contaminated with a solvent, benzene and other pollutants. Soil at the site is contaminated with the carcinogen benzene and heavy metals, such as lead. In June 2008, EPA decided lead-contaminated soil will be excavated and safely consolidated on-site, and contaminated groundwater will be extracted and treated.

According to the EPA, low levels of contamination have been detected in several of the private wells downgradient of the site.

### Health risks from exposure

EPA said in an assessment of the site that people and wildlife that come in contact with soil at the site may face health risks, mainly from lead.

"There are many different health effects associated with lead exposure, including memory or concentration problems, nerve disorders, kidney damage and learning disabilities and behavior problems in children. Small children or unborn babies are the most sensitive to lead exposure," EPA said. "People who are exposed to ground water lying underneath the site and nearby properties could experience harmful health effects from a range of chemicals including polychlorinated biphenyls related to site activities."

Under the legal agreement lodged last week, the companies will pay for planning and execution of the remediation work. The design work will begin in 2011 and cleanup is targeted for the 2012 to 2013 construction seasons.

The companies will also pay EPA \$2.4 million to oversee the work and for monitoring and other administrative costs. The companies also have to pay the state's oversight costs, which could last 25 years or more, the agreement states.

The agreement is subject to a 30-day comment period from the initial date of Dec. 22.

The companies that signed the agreement were Alcoa Aluminum Inc., ANR Pipeline Co., Clean Harbors Environmental Services Inc., Consolidated Rail Corp., CSX Transportation Inc., Ford Motor Co., Imperial Oil Limited, Ingersoll-Rand Co., Northern Indiana Public Service Co., Rockwell Automation, C. Stoddard & Sons Inc., Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co. and U.S. Steel.

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